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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. CAPITO).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 17, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SHELLY MOORE CAPITO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: The following is an adaptation to what is sometimes referred to as George Washington's prayer for this country:

"I now make this my earnest prayer: that God would have you and the State over which you preside in His holy protection; that He would incline the hearts of citizens to cultivate a spirit of respect and obedience for government, and develop a strong affection and love for one another as fellow citizens of the United States, especially for those who serve in our military; and finally that He would graciously dispose all of us to do justice, to love mercy and conduct ourselves with that charity, humility and peaceful disposition which are characteristic of Divine Authorship. Without such virtues, we can never hope to be a happy Nation." Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DEFAZIO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 384. An act to extend the existence of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group for 2 years.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minutes from each side.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, there is no ban or gag on stem cell research. In fact, more than 15,000 patients will benefit from stem cell research this year. However, we need to distinguish between the types of stem cells. Embryonic stem cell research has resulted in no cures for diseases. Aside from the destruction of embryos, embryonic stem cells present two significant problems, tumors and rejection.

The other type of stem cells, adult stem cells, we are hearing, can be found in many places: umbilical cord blood, fat tissue, bone marrow, muscle, the spleen and baby teeth, just to name a few.

Already doctors have treated diseases with adult stem cells in over 45 clinical trials, and extracting them does not harm anyone; and they are successfully being used. These cells do not present the serious ethical concerns and medical dangers of embryo-destructive research.

We need to focus our efforts on adult stem cells, not speculative and unethical research of embryonic stem cells.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the debate over the future of Social Security is complex and confusing. Even the President seems to be a bit confused. His staged town halls have focused on privatization, which actually makes the finances of Social Security worse.

On Saturday, the President talked falsely about the looming bankruptcy of Social Security. Worst case scenario, Social Security can only pay 75 to 80 percent of benefits starting in 40 to 50 years.

Until yesterday, he has been proposing cutting benefits even more to save the system. But finally yesterday, he opened the door to lifting the cap on the tax, on wages which people pay. Right now if you earn over \$90,000 a year, you do not pay any more Social Security tax. If you earn \$900,000 a year, you pay the Social Security tax at one-tenth the rate of someone who earns \$40,000. That is not fair.

Lifting the cap would assure the solvency of Social Security for at least 75 years and potentially could give a tax break to everybody who earns less than

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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